(c) whether Government are taking any action to provide relief to the patients through Thalassemia control technolgoy; developed by the Government of Italy;

(d) if so, the number of places in the country where bone marrow transplantation facility is available for the patients; and

(e) whether Government are considering the possibility of setting up a bone marrow bank, on the lines of blood banks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) There is no Central Registry for Thalassemia patients. A limited study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research on a group of selected children indicated the prevalence of Thalassemia trait at an average of about 3% in the study population. This was extrapolated statistically to estimate that about 6000 to 8000 children are born every year with Thalassemia major in India if both the spouses are carries of Thalassemia trait.

(b) Control of the disease comprised of two aspects: treatment and prevention. The mainstay of treatment being repeated blood transfusion, consequent excess of iron produced in the body is removed by chelation therapy. Regarding the drugs used in the treatment of the disease, Government have exempted some of the drugs from Customs duty/Central Excise Duty.

The curative treatment is bone marrow transplant, and this facility is currently available at Chirstian Medical College, Vellore, where a centre for Advanced Research is being funded by the Indian Council of Medical Research.

Prevention of the disease by genetic counselling/pre-natal diagnosis are available in limited centres in the country.

(c) Some countries, including Itlay, have controlled this disease through genetic counselling and pre-natal diagnosis of affected foetus during pregnancy and terminating the same. In India, such facilities are available at limited centes such as the ICMR's Institue of Immunohaematology (Mumbai); Department of Genetics, AIIMS (New Delhi); Wadia Children's Hospital (Mumbai). Some more centres are in the process of being established.

(d) Bone marrow transplantation (BMT) facilities for Thalassemia major are available at Christian Medical College, Vellore.

(e) There is no such proposal under consideration of the Government at present.

New Health for all by 2000AD Project

234. SHRI AKHILESH DAS: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to launch another ambitious project, Health for All by 2000A.D.;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) whether the project is being launched jointly by the States, the Central Government and the local bodies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) No, Sir. There is no such project. Health for All is the overall aim of the Health Policy of the country and the improvement of Health care services, particularly for the poor and disadvantaged continues to be a common objective for all those concerned with the provision of health care.

National Family Welfare Programme in Gujarat

235. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state: